

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8227

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 2090

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: FALASHA CONDITIONS AND SECURITY SITUATION IN/AROUND
GONDAR

1. EMBOFF RECENTLY SOPKE WITH GERSHON LEVY, ISRAELI CITIZEN, WHO IS REPRESENTATIVE HERE OF THE FALASHA WELFARE ASSOCIATION (FWA). LEVY STATED THAT FALASHA (ETHIOPIAN JEWISH) COMMUNITY)LOCATED NEAR GONDAR IN BEGEMDIR PROVINCE) IS GENERALLY BETTER TREATED THAN UNDER THE ANCIENT REGIME. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FWA HAS BEGUN WATER PURIFICATION, EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR THE FALASHAS. IN SUPPORT OF FWA EFFORTS, THE EPMG EVEN TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED ZEMETCHA CAMPAIGNERS TRAINED IN PUBLIC HEALTH METHODS TO THE FALASHA PROGRAMS.

2. IN SPITE OF GREATER GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF FALASHAS (WHO HISTORICALLY HAVE LIVED OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY), CONDITIONS ARE NOT GOOD. LACK OF TOURISTS TO GONDAR HAS DESTROYED MARKET FOR FALASHA ARTIFACTS (FORMERLY A MAJOR MONEY EARNER). WHERE THE FALASHAS ARE
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NUMEROUS, THEY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE LAND UNDER THE LAND

REFORM DECREE. HOWEVER, WHERE THEY ARE A MINORITY, THEY ARE EITHER BEING FORCED OFF THE LAND THEY HAD WORKED AS TENANTS OR THEY ARE STILL FORCED TO PAY TENANT RENTS. IN THESE LATTER CASES, THE GOVERNMENT IS SO ADMINISTRATIVELY WEAK IT CAN DO NOTHING.

3. LEVY EMPHASIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF CONTROL THROUGHOUT GONDAR AREA. COMMON ROBBERY, AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL INSURGENCY, IS SPREADING NEAR GONDAR. RECENTLY, BUSSES HAVE BEEN STOPPED AND ROBBED AS CLOSE AS 10-15 KMS. FROM THE CITY, AS YET, LEVY SAYS, GONDAR IS SAFE. HE ESTIMATES, HOWEVER, THAT IN SEVERAL MONTHS LAWLESSNESS WILL HAVE MOVED TO THE CITY.
HUMMEL

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